

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 04417 252336Z

22-11

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USPS-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 OC-05 CCO-00 PA-01 PRS-01 /040 W

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R 252146Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8143

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POUCHED INFO ALL CONSULAR POSTS IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, ACOM, ASEC, CFED, ELAB, ETEL, CA

SUBJ: NO END IN SIGHT IN POSTAL DISPUTE

REF: OTTAWA 4194

1. LONGEST CANADIAN POSTAL STRIKE--FIVE WEEKS OLD TODAY--
FINDS BOTH SIDES LOCKED IN RIGID OPPOSING POSITIONS WITH
NO SETTLEMENT IN SIGHT. AS REPORTED REFTEL, NON-MONETARY ISSUES
CONTAINING MAJOR GAINS FOR CANADIAN UNION OF POSTAL WORKERS
(CUPW) WERE SETTLED PRIOR TO NOV. 7 WHEN NEGOTIATIONS BROKE
OFF. SINCE THEN POSTMASTER GENERAL MACKASEY HAS CONTINUED
TO REITERATE THAT GOC'S LONG-STANDING OFFER OF 38 PERCENT AVER-
AGE INCREASE OVER 2 1/2 YEARS IS GOC'S FINAL OFFER. CUPW
HAS REFUSED TO ACCEPT THIS ALTHOUGH CUPW PRESIDENT DAVIDSON
TOLD LABATT PRIVATELY THAT UNION NEGOTIATORS WOULD ACCEPT GOC'S
WAGE OFFER IF GOC AGREED TO WORK WEEK REDUCTION FROM 40 HOURS
TO 37.5, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1977.

2. DURING ACRIMONIOUS DEBATES IN PARLIAMENT, LIBERAL MAJORITY
HAS REJECTED P.C. DEMANDS FOR ENACTMENT OF BACK TO WORK LAW
OR GOVERNMENT ORDERED BALLOTING POSTAL WORKERS ON LATEST OFFER
(GOC HAS URGED UNION CONDUCT OWN MEMBERSHIP VOTE) AND N.D.P.
REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF MEDIATOR. GOC REMAINS FIRM IN
HOLDING LINE ON TOTAL COST OF MONETARY PACKAGE BUT IS FLEXIBLE
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PAGE 02 OTTAWA 04417 252336Z

ON ALLOCATING IT DIFFERENTLY.

3. ALTHOUGH CUPW REQUESTED TREASURY BOARD TO URGE POST OFFICE RETURN TO BARGAINING TABLE, NO RESUMPTION OF NEGOTIATIONS NOW IN SIGHT. ENTIRE DISPUTE HAS BECOME TEST OF STRENGTH BETWEEN GOC AND CUPW IN WHICH POSTMASTER GENERAL HAS PROMISED TO GIVE UP HIS PORTFOLIO IF UNION MEMBERS WERE TO REJECT GOC OFFER IN SECRET BALLOT AND CUPW PRESIDENT HAS STAKED HIS RE-ELECTION ON OBTAINING BETTER CONTRACT THAN LETTER CARRIERS RECEIVED LAST SPRING.

4. STRIKE SUPPORT HOLDING FAIRLY STEADY AT ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF CUPW'S 22,000 MEMBERS. UNION OBTAINED LOAN (AMOUNT AND SOURCE UNDISCLOSED) PLUS LESSER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM UAW, ONTARIO FEDERATION OF LABOUR AND SMALL GIFTS FROM U.S. POSTAL UNIONS ENABLING IT TO PAY C\$40 WEEKLY STRIKE BENEFITS STARTING THIS WEEK.

5. FORTUNATELY CLOSE TO 50,000 MONTHLY U.S. BENEFIT CHECKS FOR AMERICANS RESIDING IN CANADA ARE BEING DISTRIBUTED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH PARTIALLY OPERATING LOCAL POSTAL SERVICES AFTER EMBASSY AND CONSTITUENT POSTS PICK THEM UP AT US BORDER POINTS.

6. ASSUMING IRRECONCILABLE POSITIONS MAINTAINED BY BOTH SIDES STRIKE CAN ONLY BE TERMINATED EITHER BY MASSIVE DEFECTIONS AMONG UNION MEMBERS BRINGING ABOUT COLLAPSE OF STRIKE WHICH GOC IS APPARENTLY COUNTING ON, OR BACK-TO-WORK LEGISLATION WHICH CUPW LEADERS WOULD ACCEPT AS MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM CURRENT IMPASSE BUT WHICH GOC STILL OPPOSES AS PREMATURE AND POLITICALLY UNPALATABLE INTERFERENCE IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS.
JOHNSON

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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